

“We want to be the best place to teach and learn in America,” said Easley. “That means providing good working conditions, competitive salaries and high standards for both teachers and students.”

Easley’s plan will raise North Carolina’s pay, when adjusted for cost of living, above the national average by 2006-07 and to \$4,000 above the national average by 2008-09.

The salary plan is North Carolina’s latest effort of a multi-pronged plan to recruit and retain high quality teachers for all children. In 2002, Easley launched a Teacher Working Conditions initiative that has become a national model in surveying teachers on their working conditions, provides reports at the state, district, and school level, and is developing customized plans for improving working conditions in low performing districts.

The state has also invested in the “2+2” Teacher Education Partnership between the UNC and Community College systems to train teachers in geographic areas where they are needed most; a new two-year scholarship program for teachers of math, science, special education and limited English proficient students; additional Teaching Fellows scholarships; and funding for the Low Wealth and Disadvantaged Students Supplemental Funds, in part to provide these districts with additional resources to recruit and retain teachers in hard-to-staff schools.

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